

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 001337

SIPDIS

WHA/CAR (BENT), INL/LP (KBROWN)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/24/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [SNAR](#) [JM](#)

SUBJECT: PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATION OF JAMAICA CALL FOR  
WIDESPREAD CRIME PROTEST

REF: A. KINGSTON 01258

[B](#). POWELL/BENT 5/20 EMAIL

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Ronald Robinson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Protesting against the escalating crime rate, the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica (PSOJ) announced on Thursday, May 19, their intention to lead a three day protest, commencing with a rally at Emancipation Park, located a block from the Consular Section in New Kingston, on Wednesday, May 25. Beverly Lopez, President of the PSOJ advised Econoff on May 20 that the planned protest is not anti-government, but is meant to show that "enough is enough." As part of the event at Emancipation Park, Lopez hopes to have each Cabinet member publicly reaffirm their support for the rule of law.

[1](#)2. (C) It was the death of four policemen (Ref A) and that of prominent businessmen, Maurice Azan and his stepson Lloyd Phang, which spurred the PSOJ and other civic organizations such as the Jamaica Exporters' Association and the Jamaica Manufacturers' Association into action. (Note: On Saturday, May 14, Azan and Phang were both killed when heavily armed gunmen entered Azan's supermarket in May Pen, Clarendon and opened fire. Police state the gunmen escaped with an undetermined sum of money. NAS Law Enforcement Development Advisor confirmed the police believe the motive behind the killings was extortion. End Note.) On May 19, the PSOJ announced a three-day private sector show of protest against the staggering homicide rate to run from May 25 to May 27. Plans include an island-wide shutdown of commercial activities on May 25. Flowers will be laid at a newly erected memorial at Trafalgar Park in downtown Kingston on May 26 and the protest will culminate with a meeting between PSOJ members, government officials and Opposition leaders on the 27th.

[1](#)3. (C) Delroy Chuck, Opposition Spokesperson on Justice Issues, told Poloff on May 24 that he would not be attending the three day event and that he "heard the PSOJ would be calling for a State of Emergency." Chuck stated a state of emergency would be sending the wrong signal and that he could not support it as it would "negatively affect" tourism. What Jamaica has, Chuck noted is a "failed administration." "Not only is society in a state of anarchy but so is the police force and education system." Further, Chuck stated that the protest is definitely a good gesture but "nothing will come of it."

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: This show of solidarity is more than welcome in a country where the homicide rate has averaged 125 people per month. As the PSOJ and other members of society have pointed out, however, it will take much more than this symbolic gesture to stem the high rate of crime. Although the protest is meant to be a stand against the overall homicide and crime rate, it took the death of an affluent white Jamaican businessman to spur private sector businesses into action. While it appears the GOJ is unable to win public confidence with its anti-crime measures, the private sector may now be stepping up to play a more civic-minded role. Post will report further on the PSOJ shutdown and rally as the day unfolds. End comment.  
ROBINSON